which have strayed onto their lands from the National Forest System may do so by notifying the nearest office of the Forest Service in a timely fashion and providing such information on a continuing basis as the Chief, Forest Service, may require. Such owners shall protect the wild free-roaming horses and burros on their lands. They may not, in so maintaining these animals, impede their return to National Forest System lands unless authorized by agreement with the Forest Service.

§ 222.28 Agreements.

The Chief, Forest Service, may enter into agreements as he deems necessary to further the protection, management, and control of wild free-roaming horses and burros.

§ 222.29 Relocation and disposal of animals.

(a) The Chief, Forest Service, shall, when he determines over-population of wild horses and burros exists and removal is required, take immediate necessary action to remove excess animals from that particular territory. Such action shall be taken until all excess animals have been removed so as to restore a thriving natural ecological balance to the range, and protect the range from deterioration associated with over-population.

(b) No person except an authorized Forest Service officer or his agent shall destroy, remove, or relocate any wild free-roaming horse or burro located on the National Forest System.

(c) Wild horses and burros shall be relocated or removed in the following order of priority:

(1) In the most humane manner possible, sick, lame, or old animals shall be destroyed;

(2) Relocate animals to other National Forest System lands which were identified as 1971 wild horse or burro territory, providing suitable habitat exists and relocation of animals will not jeopardize vegetation condition;

(3) Relocate animals to other federally-owned lands which were identified as 1971 wild horse or burro occupied lands, providing suitable habitat exists and relocation of animals will not jeopardize vegetation condition and ani-

mals are requested by the appropriate land manager having jurisdiction;

(4) Place animals under private maintenance and care agreements where there is an adoption demand by qualified individuals, groups, or Government agency, and for which there is assurance of humane treatment and care, provided not more than four animals are placed under private maintenance and care agreements per year to any individual, organization, or government agency unless there is a determination expressed otherwise in writing, by an authorized Forest Service Officer; and

(5) Excess animals, for which an adoption demand by qualified applicants does not exist, shall be destroyed in the most humane manner possible, and if several methods are equally humane, select the most cost efficient.

(d) Where excess animals have been placed under private maintenance and care agreements after December 15, 1971, as provided for in paragraph (c)(4) of this section, and animals have been provided humane conditions, treatment, and care, for a period of one year, the Chief, Forest Service, may grant title to not more than four animals per year to each individual, organization, or government agency.

(e) The applicants must make written application for title and/or adoption, must be of legal age in the State in which they reside, and must pay fees for adoption and transportation as follows:

(1) The application must be accompanied by a nonrefundable advance payment of $25 by guaranteed remittance. If custody of a wild, free-roaming horse or burro is granted by the authorized Forest Service officer, the advance payment shall be applied against the adoption fee required to be paid at the time the maintenance and care agreement § 222.29(c)(4) is executed.

(2) The Forest Service shall charge an adoption fee of $125 for each horse and $75 for each burro, except that there shall be no adoption fee for an unweaned offspring under 6 months of age accompanying its mother.

(3) Any transportation costs incurred for the transportation of the animal(s) to the point of pickup must be paid before an approved individual, group, or